

To: Zaragoza, Larry[Zaragoza.Larry@epa.gov]
Cc: Stalcup, Dana[Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov]
From: Deitz, Randy
Sent: Tue 10/20/2015 8:54:01 PM
Subject: RE: AP - Matt Brown: EPA suspends new work at 10 mine sites

Do we need an answer today. I will be with Mathy tomorrow morning at a Good Sam hearing and I can ask him then.

Randy Deitz

Attorney Advisor

Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response

(202) 566-0197

From: Zaragoza, Larry
Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2015 4:03 PM
To: Deitz, Randy <Deitz.Randy@epa.gov>
Cc: Stalcup, Dana <Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov>; Wells, Suzanne <Wells.Suzanne@epa.gov>; Fitz-James, Schatzi <Fitz-James.Schatzi@epa.gov>; Mahmud, Shahid <Mahmud.Shahid@epa.gov>; Dreyfus, Melissa G. <Dreyfus.Melissa@epa.gov>; Gartner, Lois <Gartner.Lois@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: AP - Matt Brown: EPA suspends new work at 10 mine sites

Hi Randy,

I left you a voicemail message about the interest of a land managing agency who wanted to see the list of 15 sites, where we stopped work on 10.

We have released the 10 "stopped work" sites to the AP, but have never identified the 5 sites that we allowed to keep working to others outside EPA. As Mathy and Barry have continued interest in these 15 sites, is there any reason not to share those 5 sites that continued work with other federal agencies?

I would suggest sharing with representatives from BLM, OSM, USDA, USFS, NPS, DOI, and FWS. This information would allow these agencies to see if they had mines/property close by which might have similar issues.

Also, we had discussed sharing the memo requesting information on the 682 mining/mineral processing sites. The item of interest is the way that we are identifying sites with the potential for liquid discharge under pressure.

Thanks for your help.

Larry

From: Wells, Suzanne

Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2015 12:30 PM

To: Zaragoza, Larry <Zaragoza.Larry@epa.gov>; Dreyfus, Melissa G. <Dreyfus.Melissa@epa.gov>; Stalcup, Dana <Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov>; Mahmud, Shahid <Mahmud.Shahid@epa.gov>

Cc: Fitz-James, Schatzi <Fitz-James.Schatzi@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: AP - Matt Brown: EPA suspends new work at 10 mine sites

Larry, can you clarify who you are thinking the list should be shared with...is it everyone who attended the FMD meeting, is it all the contacts from the land management agencies who attended the FMD meeting or is it just a few who requested the information? If it is just a few, which agencies are they from?

Dana, I think we should share either the list of 10 or 15 mine sites with the land management agencies who requested it. They want to see the list so they can determine if they have mines in the vicinity of the mines where work was stopped in order to assess if they may also have potential problems.

Suzanne Wells

Chief, Community Involvement and Program Initiatives Branch

Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation

(703) 603-8863

(703) 603-9112 (fax)

USEPA/William Jefferson Clinton Federal Building (MC 5204P)

1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20460



From: Zaragoza, Larry

Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2015 12:23 PM

To: Wells, Suzanne <Wells.Suzanne@epa.gov>; Dreyfus, Melissa G. <Dreyfus.Melissa@epa.gov>; Stalcup, Dana <Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov>; Mahmud, Shahid <Mahmud.Shahid@epa.gov>

Cc: Fitz-James, Schatzi <Fitz-James.Schatzi@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: AP - Matt Brown: EPA suspends new work at 10 mine sites

Hi Suzanne,

The original request was for us to share the list of 15 sites with them so that they could see if any of their sites (i.e., sites on federal land). This article does not even list the 10 sites referenced in the article but if we have released the names and location of the 10 sites, that would be responsive to their request. Is that what you would like me to confirm?

Larry

From: Wells, Suzanne
Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2015 12:08 PM
To: Dreyfus, Melissa G. <Dreyfus.Melissa@epa.gov>; Stalcup, Dana <Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov>; Zaragoza, Larry <Zaragoza.Larry@epa.gov>; Mahmud, Shahid <Mahmud.Shahid@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: AP - Matt Brown: EPA suspends new work at 10 mine sites

Larry,

I believe one or more of the federal land management agency reps asked you for the list of mine sites where work was stopped during yesterday's FMD meeting. I believe they were asking because they wanted to look to see if they had any sites on their lands in the vicinity of the mines where work was stopped.

Can you clarify the request so we can decide what to send them?

Suzanne Wells

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From: Dreyfus, Melissa G.

Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2015 11:20 AM

To: Stalcup, Dana <Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov>; Wells, Suzanne <Wells.Suzanne@epa.gov>; Zaragoza, Larry <Zaragoza.Larry@epa.gov>; Mahmud, Shahid <Mahmud.Shahid@epa.gov>

Subject: FW: AP - Matt Brown: EPA suspends new work at 10 mine sites

The article about the 10 mine sites.

Melissa Greer Dreyfus

Environmental Health Scientist

Community Involvement and Program Initiatives Branch

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Phone: 703-603-8792

email: dreyfus.melissa@epa.gov

From: Stalcup, Dana

Sent: Saturday, September 12, 2015 4:51 PM

To: OSWER OSRTI IO <OSWER_OSRTI_IO@epa.gov>; Lindsay, Nancy <Lindsay.Nancy@epa.gov>; Manzanilla, Enrique <Manzanilla.Enrique@epa.gov>; Grandinetti, Cami <Grandinetti.Cami@epa.gov>; Albright, Rick <Albright.Rick@epa.gov>; Fleming, Sheila

<fleming.sheila@epa.gov>; Hestmark, Martin <Hestmark.Martin@epa.gov>; Ostrander, David <Ostrander.David@epa.gov>; Murray, Bill <Murray.Bill@epa.gov>; Peterson, Mary <Peterson.Mary@epa.gov>; Jackson, Robert W. <Jackson.Robertw@epa.gov>; Mahmud, Shahid <Mahmud.Shahid@epa.gov>; Dreyfus, Melissa G. <Dreyfus.Melissa@epa.gov>; Ammon, Doug <Ammon.Doug@epa.gov>; Jeng, Richard <Jeng.Richard@epa.gov>; Fitz-James, Schatzi <Fitz-James.Schatzi@epa.gov>; Scozzafava, MichaelE <Scozzafava.MichaelE@epa.gov>; Stalcup, Dana <Stalcup.Dana@epa.gov>; Wells, Suzanne <Wells.Suzanne@epa.gov>; Zaragoza, Larry <Zaragoza.Larry@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: AP - Matt Brown: EPA suspends new work at 10 mine sites

Dana Stalcup

Director, Assessment and Remediation Division

OSWER/Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation (OSRTI)

Desk – 703-603-8702

Cell – 202-309-5473

From: Allen, Laura

Sent: Saturday, September 12, 2015 10:34 AM

To: Stanislaus, Mathy

Cc: Deitz, Randy; Stalcup, Dana; Harrison, Melissa

Subject: Fwd: AP - Matt Brown: EPA suspends new work at 10 mine sites

Mathy- AP story is below. It's pretty straightforward. Huge thanks to Randy and Dana who helped get the info together.

Hope your vaca is off to a good start!

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Gray, David" <gray.david@epa.gov>
Date: September 12, 2015 at 8:57:02 AM EDT
To: "Reynolds, Thomas" <Reynolds.Thomas@epa.gov>, "Allen, Laura" <Allen.Laura@epa.gov>, "Lee, Monica" <Lee.Monica@epa.gov>, "Hull, George" <Hull.George@epa.gov>, "Grantham, Nancy" <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: AP - Matt Brown: EPA suspends new work at 10 mine sites

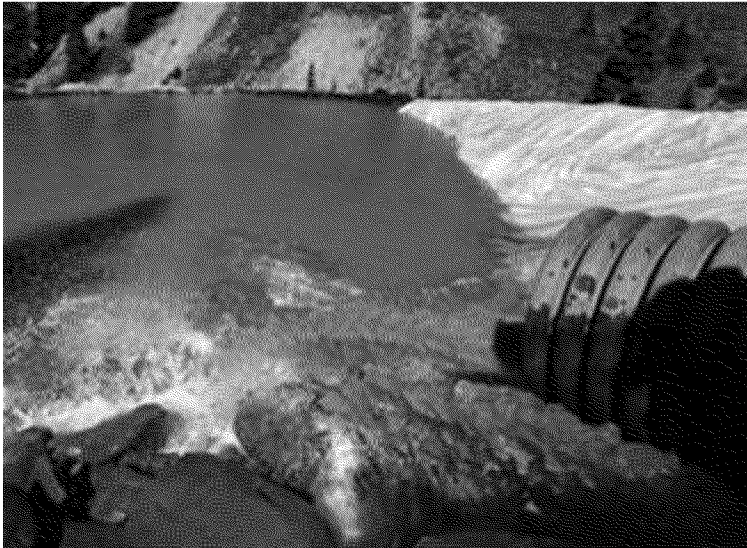
AP Exclusive: EPA suspends new work at 10 mine sites across US to avoid repeat of huge spill

AP Exclusive: After spill, work suspended at 10 mine sites

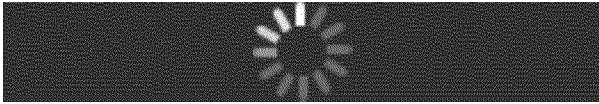
By MATTHEW BROWN and DAN ELLIOTT | Associated Press | 3 hours, 9 minutes ago in [Science](#), [Money](#)

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Site investigations and some cleanup work at 10 polluted mining complexes in four states were suspended because of conditions similar to those that led to a massive wastewater blowout from an inactive Colorado gold mine, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials said.

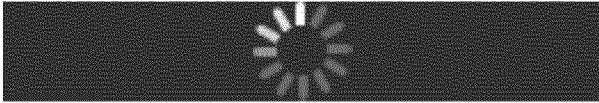
[Article continues below](#)



FILE - In this Aug. 14, 2015 file photo, water flows through a series of sediment retention ponds built to reduce heavy metal and chemical contaminants from the Gold King Mine wastewater accident, in... (Associated Press)



FILE - In this Aug. 14, 2015 file photo, an Environmental Protection Agency contractor keeps a bag of lime on hand to correct the PH of mine wastewater flowing into a series of sediment retention ponds,... (Associated Press)



FILE - In this Aug. 12, 2015 file photo, water flows through a series of retention ponds built to contain and filter out heavy metals and chemicals from the Gold King mine chemical accident, in the spillway... (Associated Press)



FILE - In this Aug. 12, 2015 file photo, Environmental Protection Agency contractors use heavy machinery to repair damage at the site of the blowout at the Gold King mine which triggered a major spill... (Associated Press)

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The sites include three in California, four in Colorado, two in Montana and one in Missouri, according to details obtained by The Associated Press following repeated requests for the information.

They have the potential for contaminated water to build up inside mine workings, EPA Assistant Administrator Mathy Stanislaus said. That would set the stage for a possible spill such as last month's near Silverton, Colorado, where an EPA team triggered a 3 million gallon blowout of toxic sludge while doing excavation work on the inactive Gold King Mine.

The accident fouled rivers in three states and attracted harsh criticism of the EPA for not being prepared despite prior warnings that such a spill could happen.

"We want to take extra caution before we initiate any work," Stanislaus said of the work suspensions. Some the mines were abandoned decades ago and have grown more unstable over time, raising the risk of an accident.

The stop-work order was issued last month but officials for weeks refused to disclose specifics.

Cleanup efforts on some of the mines have been going on for years yet remain unfinished, underscoring the complexity of a long-running attempt to address an estimated 500,000 abandoned mines across the U.S. Work on others was in the early stages.

In a report to Congress delivered Friday, the Government Accountability Office said federal agencies identified thousands of contaminated mine sites in recent years — even as their attempts

to assess what harm is being done to people and the environment have lagged.

Further investigations were needed to gauge the danger posed by the 10 mining complexes under the suspension before work could safely resume, according to internal EPA documents released by the agency.

That includes categorizing their level of hazard. For those deemed a "probable hazard," the EPA plans to keep the work stoppage in place until emergency plans are drawn up to deal with any accident.

The agency also wants to get the results of an Interior Department investigation into the Colorado accident before proceeding on most of the other sites. That's expected in late October, department officials said.

Prior to the Aug. 5 Gold King spill, the EPA and its contractor, Environmental Restoration LLC of St. Louis, appeared to have only a cursory emergency response plan in the event of a spill, according to documents released under public records requests.

There was no cellphone coverage at the remote site in the San Juan Mountains, and the workers did not have a satellite phone, according to EPA documents. As a result, they had no way to immediately communicate with the outside world when the rust-colored water loaded with heavy metals, including lead and arsenic, began rushing toward downstream communities.

One of the sites where cleanup work was subsequently halted was the Standard Mine in the mountains above Crested Butte, a ski town in west-central Colorado. Crested Butte Mayor Aaron Huckstep said that after work was suspended, the EPA met with residents and officials and made sure cleanup workers could communicate directly with the town in an emergency.

"They understood that they needed to make sure that the communication channels and the communication protocols were in place and the folks knew who to call and when to call them," Huckstep said.

EPA documents show wastewater at the site periodically spills over a crudely-built impoundment, raising concerns about a "potential catastrophic failure" and the possibility of tainting Crested Butte's drinking water. But Huckstep said he didn't believe the Standard Mine was a threat to blow out, based on EPA statements and differences in the land.

The EPA said the town's water meets safety standards.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment spokesman Warren Smith said wastewater flowing from the mine was not considered an acute health threat. Work on the site resumed Sept. 4 after officials determined appropriate safety measures were in place.

The Aug. 12 stop-work order from EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy did not apply to sites where halting operations would pose a threat to people or increase the potential for harm to the environment, according to internal EPA documents.

Also exempted were portions of the 10 stopped projects where construction already was completed, such as treatment systems for contaminated water that pours continually from many abandoned mine shafts.

That's the case for two sites listed in northern California — the Leviathan sulfur mine near the town of Markleeville and the Iron Mountain metals mine near Redding. Water continues to be collected at

the sites, to be treated and then discharged.

"We have not received any direction from EPA to shut down our treatment. It's been business as usual for us out there," said Scott Ferguson with the Lahonton Regional Water Quality Control Board, which is involved with the Leviathan mine.

EPA spokeswoman Laura Allen said other work at the two mines has stopped, including plans to remove a beaver dam at Leviathan.